2:Lewis E-5 (1943-1948)1951 NU37 Tepoztlan NU37

each of the barrios, as well as of some of the villages, are appealed to for rain. All the images are shut up in the parish church and are taken out in procession only in the afternoon when the sun is high, so that the images will feel the heat and notice the people's discomfort and sadness.

The saints with greater punishing powers are most assiduously worshipped. Saint Peter, of the barrio of San Pedro, is one of these. If there are not enough dancers at his feast day, he brings illness and misfortune to those who did not participate. Saint Peter, whose image is accompanied by a lion, is said to use this animal to frighten children into dancing for him and sometimes to appear to a father who has refused to permit his children to dance. It is also believed that if a person does not accept the office of *mayordomo* of the barrio of San Pedro, the lion will be sent to frighten him.

In their view of the saints, Tepoztecans reveal a tendency toward polytheism. This is indicated in the distinct attitudes toward the different images of the same saint. For example, the various local figures of Christ do not all have equal powers and are not all worshipped with equal fervor. The Christ of Ixcatepec is considered "very miraculous" and is called upon when there is great misfortune, such as extreme drought. He is rendered special homage by taking children, dressed in white tunics and wearing a crown of thorns and little thorn crosses on their backs, to the chapel of Ixcatepec to do penance.

The conception of the soul will be discussed in Chapter 19, "Old Age and Death." Here it should be noted that Tepoztecans distinguish between the body, the soul, and the spirit in the following way: "The body serves us for all our needs, to satisfy our necessities," and "The soul is that which gives life to the body and which will be punished in the other life according to our sins."

When a sin is committed, "The body is not at fault, it is the soul which rules." The spirit guards the body and soul from all that is bad, it is the Guardian Angel, "like a dove, like a pigeon, but invisible." The spirit is the companion of the soul and gives it strength. "That is why when a person is not brave, he has little spirit."

The question of sin does not overly concern Tepoztecans. Sin is inevitable, for "we are all sinners." It comes as "malice" enters a person and as innocence leaves, it comes with knowledge of life, with sexuality, with loss of virginity or purity. Malice can be delayed by keeping children in ignorance, but sooner or later they will become sinners. However, sinners are differentiated according to the degree of their sin, so that there are good sinners and bad sinners.

Sins, too, vary in degree. To the Tepoztecan, lying, adultery, and failure to attend Mass, to take communion, to confess, or to celebrate feast days are without importance as sins. The Ten Commandments and other fundamental rules of conduct imposed by the Catholic Church do not control the behavior of the Tepoztecan. For him the most important sins are stealing, killing, and practicing witchcraft. These acts are also differentiated in degree of gravity.

In the case of theft there is a wide range of permissible stealing which is not considered sinful. Thus, it is no sin to steal the roof tiles, or the hearthstones, or the

2:Lewis E-5 (1943-1948) 1951 NU37 Tepoztlan NU37

673 religious images of a temporarily abandoned house; "that is not a sin, that was
783 abandoned, and it would be worse if it were lost." When someone's pig is run
685 down by an automobile on the highway, the neighbors quickly come with knives and cut away the best portions of meat; this is no sin "since it is the custom of the people." But if one steals the growing corn, or corn after the harvest, or money —"that is really a great sin." Who does the stealing and from whom he steals also determine the degree of the sin. When cattle are stolen from a fellow villager it is a serious matter, cattle stolen by an outsider even more so, but cattle stolen by a Tepoztecan from a non-Tepoztecan is an act of minor importance. Thus, a young man whose father had died, and whose mother had lost most of their property to lawyers, supported himself by stealing cattle in places distant from Tepoztlán. He would go away for several weeks and return with cattle which he sold in the village or used in the fields. He is generally respected and considered *honrado*, although his actions are well known. "Since the poor fellow lost his inheritance, he sometimes goes out of Tepoztlán to struggle with the cattle of others."

While we were in the village, a highly respected person, prominent in state politics, was accused of having stolen a Zebu bull from a national experimental farm. The townspeople were impressed by his astuteness and did not take the attitude that he had done anything sinful or reprehensible.

673 In regard to killing, Tepoztecans also distinguish between excusable and in-
783 excusable murders. If "one is like an assassin who kills in cold blood and for mere pleasure," it is a sin. But if one kills for some purpose, it is another matter. To
[682] kill a mortal enemy without warning is not a sin since the killer "only got ahead of the dead man" and took advantage of his carelessness. The shooting of a thief or suspected thief on sight is another type of justified killing.

[683] Sorcery and witchcraft of any kind are great sins. Those who practice these "devil's arts" are certain to be punished after death, but they are left unmolested while they live and may be consulted by fellow villagers for cures or for advice in bewitching others.

[684] Adultery is considered a sin only for women, but here again certain cases are
562 excused. For example, "When a man demands good food at home and doesn't give the money to buy it, then he is forcing his wife to look for other men," and since he is the cause of the adultery or if he permits it, it is not a serious matter.

[683] Calumny, criticism, and gossip are special sins of women, but drunkenness on
562 the part of men is not considered a sin.

[273] Other beliefs held by Tepoztecans which are of interest are those of *Naguales*,
754 *los aires*, omens, healers, witches, and sorcerers.

[825] The *Nagual* is a person who has the power to change into an animal, such as a dog or pig. This ancient belief is widely known in Tepoztlán but is considered to be dying out. Informants alluded to *Naguales* as beings of the past, as no longer existing, or, at least, no longer wishing to show themselves. To become a *Nagual*, one must make a pact with the devil and learn certain prayers which allow a man to turn into an animal. Other prayers take away the powers of a *Nagual* and make

2;Lewis E-5 (1943-1948) 1951 NU37 Tepoztlan NU37

COURTSHIP

Courtship before marriage is relatively new in Tepoztlán. Before the Revolution most marriages were arranged by the parents, with or without the consent of the children. Girls married at a very early age, leaving little opportunity for courtship. From the life stories of informants now in their fifties, we learn that in some cases young people did not know each other before marriage and met for the first time at the wedding ceremony in the church. Parents frequently had to threaten their young daughters with physical punishment to get them to consent to the marriage. The following excerpt from the life story of a woman, now a widow of sixty is quite typical:

584 [178]

I was eleven years old when a boy came from Gabriel Mariaca to ask for my hand. He came with his parents and a jar of silver money. But my grandmother became angry and told them I was still a child, and she didn't want to see me going about carrying babies yet. When I was twelve my mother took me home again. Then a boy of sixteen came to ask for me, and my mother said yes. She told me that she wanted me to marry before something bad happened to me. I did not want to marry, especially because I did not know who the boy was. My mother said that if I did not say yes to the priest in the church she would throw me down from the top of the church. I was afraid and did what my mother told me.

Often young people knew each other, at least by sight, but contacts were few, brief, and secretive. Being *novios* at that time meant only that the parents had made arrangements for the marriage, and the date had been set. *Novios* were not permitted to be alone together at any time before marriage. In a few better-to-do and literate families, *novios* would court secretly by exchanging love letters.

Today courtship before marriage is common. Parents lament the changing of the old ways and are concerned over the fact that boys and girls have many opportunities to become acquainted with one another, particularly at school. Indeed, it is unusual for a girl over thirteen or a boy over fifteen not to have a *novio*. The local priest has recognized this and has stated in doctrinal classes that having a *novio* is not a sin, and the girls need no longer mention it at confession. But, he added, it is a sin to be *novios* for more than six months before marriage. It is common for girls to have an initial sense of guilt in accepting their first *novio*, but this is only a fleeting reaction, and girls are much more conscious of fear than guilt.

[673] [783]

There is much secrecy surrounding courtship. A girl who is found to have a *novio* is severely punished by her parents. She may be beaten, denied food, not given new clothing, and not permitted to leave the house alone for a long time thereafter. There is a great readiness among the older generation, particularly among relatives, to inform a girl's parents if they see her talking or walking with a boy, and *novios* take extra precautions not to be seen by them.

Courtship is usually initiated by the boy. Fear of refusal is very strong, and he plans his conquest carefully and proceeds slowly. The timidity of boys in approaching a girl for the first time is the subject of much joking among girls. Drinking to